HELP ?

The European union and Turkey

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Abstract:
*The **EU** decision to put **Turkey's** application for full membership on indefinite hold underscores the urgent need to develop alternative visions for their future relationship.*

Full Text:

Relations between Turkey and the European Union (EU) have gone badly wrong. After decades of standing in the queue, Turkey is the only country with a current membership application against which the EU door has been slammed shut. That door is bound to remain closed for the foreseeable future, a situation that poses problems not only for both sides, but also for the whole framework of security in the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Since the US is more enthusiastic about Turkish membership of the EU than are most EU members, it could even damage transatlantic relations. The EU's December 1997 sidelining of Turkey's application for full membership upset long-standing expectations and commitments, however shaky they may have been, and threw open an array of possibilities, some of them worrying. Particularly dangerous would be a worsening of Turkey's resentful reaction against the EU, a reaction very much evident when Turkey suspended all political relations (but not the customs union) with the EU after its rejection.1 Understandable as it may seem from the perspective of the Turkish government, such a reaction threatens to make cooperation between the EU and Turkey even more difficult.

There is no consensus either in Turkey or in the EU about how their relationship should develop, and there is a considerable danger that emotional reactions radiating from the breakdown will poison the possibilities. The polemics arising from Italy's refusal in late 1998 to extradite Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan to Turkey showed the potency of that poison. A central difficulty lies in the way that the EU-Turkey relationship penetrates deeply into the domestic politics of both sides. The internal political constitution and the basic construction of collective identity in both entities is deeply intertwined with the nature of the relationship between them. (In the case of Europe, the identity issue revolves around who can and who cannot be considered 'European'.) This relationship is thus important not only in itself and for its regional consequences, but also because it is fundamental to the future development of the political form and the identity of Turkey and the EU alike.

There is an urgent need to reassess the current policies between Turkey and the EU, which are largely still rooted in the past, and to develop alternative visions for their future relationship. That Turkey will not become a full EU member in the foreseeable future need not be seen as an inherently bad thing. A Turkey that is closely linked to the EU, but not fully part of it, may find it easier to develop more tolerant and pluralistic forms of national identity and to intensify its relations with its neighbouring states in the Caucasus and other Turkic states in Central Asia. The EU, for its part, may continue to support further democratisation and liberalisation in Turkey, while not running the risk of being drawn

into tensions and conflicts in which it does not have to be directly involved.

Building such a new relationship will not be easy, because it requires both parties to reflect on their self-definitions - definitions with which they felt quite comfortable throughout the Cold War, but which now seem increasingly contradictory. Failure to build such a new relationship will mean that both parties continue to store up a legacy of troubles that will have repercussions far beyond either their domestic politics or the particulars of the relationship between them.

Rethinking the relationship between Turkey and the EU requires attention to two conceptual points. First, the old game between the EU and Turkey (and indeed between the EU and all of its periphery) has been played too much according to strict 'inside/outside' understandings about which relationships are possible and desirable within the EU framework.2 Putting too much emphasis on being wholly 'in' or 'not in' has narrowed political visions in an unhelpful way, and runs counter to the EU's increasingly 'postmodern' character.3 Second, there has been excessive blurring of the distinction between Turkey's relationship with Europe on the one hand, and with the West (particularly the US) on the other. This issue is linked to a wider confusion about differing concepts of the 'West'. These distinctions have to be kept clear if a new course is to be charted.

The Old Game between Turkey and the EU

The old game between Turkey and the EU can be summarised as follows:

apparent promises of full membership to Turkey by the European Community;

strong commitment to, and expectation of, eventual membership by Turkey;

slow implementation of their commitments by both sides.

The 1963 Ankara (or Association) Agreement gave associate membership of the EC to Turkey. This status was granted mainly to improve Turkey's economic performance and living standards. Beyond that, the preamble and Article 28 of the Agreement stressed that this improvement should facilitate later EC membership, which would be considered once full implementation of the Agreement had indicated that Turkey was ready to take over the responsibilities emanating from the EC Treaty.4 The Agreement thus seemed to recognise Turkey's claim to be a European state. Given Turkey's relatively low level of economic development, its strong authoritarian political traditions and weak civil society, the Agreement opened up a long road, but one with a definite terminus. The underlying assumption on both sides, but particularly in Turkey, was that implementation of the Agreement would help to bring about an 'economic miracle'.5 But Turkey was subsequently excluded from the various widenings of the EC/EU in 1973, 1981, 1986 and 1995. Its application for full membership in 1987, after nearly seven years of standstill in the wake of the 1980 military coup, was politely rejected in 1989. The grounds of the rejection included failure to qualify on a long list of 'standard of civilisation' issues, such as insufficient political pluralism, too many human-rights violations and problems over Cyprus. The Commission instead urged more cooperation to bring Turkey gradually closer to the Union. This led to the reinvigoration of the Agreement, and in 1996 Turkey finally achieved the unique status of having a customs union with the EU.6 The debate surrounding the rejection of immediate full membership made clear the growing concern over the economic and political implications of taking into the EU a large state with enormous regional differences in economic performance. But it also highlighted concerns about the expected increase in migration due to freedom of movement within the EU. German politicians in particular raised this issue. Whereas in the 1960s, Turkish immigrants were welcome as a

source of badly needed labour, later discussions about migration emanated from a very different economic situation in the major EU states, with more concern that further migration might provoke social conflict.7 The final blow came in December 1997, when the EU's Luxembourg European Council meeting effectively pushed Turkey off the list of prospective full members. The Council reiterated 'Turkey's eligibility for accession to the European Union', and asked the Commission to prepare a strategy for assisting Turkey with further reforms - the so-called 'European strategy for Turkey'. However, given the queue of other applicant states with more favourable prospects, the effect of this decision was to put off full membership indefinitely. Out of 12 recognised applicants, Turkey remains the only country that is not yet visibly on the track to membership.8

Since 1981, crises in the EU-Turkish relationship have been partly due to the demands of the new EC member Greece, a major obstacle, for example, to reinvigorating the Ankara Agreement and then implementing the customs union. But stops and starts in the EU-Turkey relationship have also been driven by domestic developments in Turkey. Military interventions in government there during 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997 have been particularly troubling to the relationship, and it is claimed that the military had more influence on the Turkish government in 1998 than at any time since the last democratisation of 1983.9 Corresponding human-rights violations in Ankara's treatment of both the Kurdish population and other critical voices were especially egregious during the 1970s and 1980s, but a more recent example was the attempt at prohibiting the author Ayse Zarakolu from leaving the country to receive the Freedom to Publish award at the 1998 Frankfurt Book Fair.

Within Turkey, the legitimacy of the political and military elite's 'Kemalist' project of Westernising the country has depended, to a significant degree, on a plausible prospect of EU membership. Kemalism - the state ideology bequeathed by Kemal Ataturk, founder of modern Turkey - rests on six pillars:lo

secularism (removing the direct influence of religious leaders on political decisions and education);

republicanism (organising the polity as a modern state, as opposed to the Ottoman Empire);

populism (not accepting class divisions, but making the well-being of the people as a whole the central aim of politics);

nationalism (establishing a single, unified Turkish nation beyond religious or ethnic allegiances);

etatism (securing state influence in the economy);

reformism (continuous adaptation of the state to new conditions).

This overall design is still upheld by the Westernising elite, despite some changes in detail. Even where it has been abandoned, as in the case of etatism since the 1980s, its legacy is still strong: the state-run sector still accounts for 11% of value added in industrial production.11

In decades past, the promoters of Kemalism justified their programme partly on the grounds that it was a path leading to eventual membership of the EC/EU. At the same time, advocates of Turkey's EC/EU candidacy, both in Turkey and in EU member-states, have considered it something of a sacred truth that membership is a necessary anchor for Westernisation. A Turkey remaining outside, according to the standard argument, would be prey to Islamist forces, would draw away from Europe and towards the Middle East, and thus would become a factor of instability and a threat to Europe's southeastern border. Such arguments as are put forth by Turkish politicians - our country is 'European', our

neighbours are not - is a refrain common to EU membership applicants.12 In the case of Turkey, however, such arguments ignore the differences between the Kemalist definitions of the 'West' and those prevalent in the EU.

Ankara's Westernisation strategy has, in fact, effectively led to an increasing or at least unchanged distance from the EU when it comes to issues of pluralism, democracy and human rights. The November 1998 report of the Commission on Turkey writes of an 'excessively narrow interpretation of the Constitution and other legal provisions ... concerning the unity of the state, territorial integrity, secularism and respect for formal institutions of the state'.13 At the same time, Westernisation understood in such a limited way denies the historical and cultural differences between Turkey and Europe, as well as within Turkey itself.

Thus, the Westernisation project poses a cultural problem on two levels. First, under the surface of 'Westernisation' one finds different political cultures.14 Some liberals in Turkey hold democratic, pluralist views of Westernisation that are broadly in line with current understandings in the West itself. But some Islamists in Turkey reject any sort of Westernisation, and some Kemalists pursue a vision of Westernisation that owes more to its nineteenthand early twentieth-century nationalist and authoritarian traditions, than to late twentieth-century liberal ones. Second, to strengthen the current Westernisation movement is to deny many Turks their right to cultural selfdetermination. From this perspective, the culturalist undertones of membership rejection in 1997, most explicit in statements of Christian Democrat leaders after a meeting of the European People's Party in March 1997, in which their argument against an early EU membership of Turkey was partly based on civilisational and cultural difference, cannot be easily dismissed out of hand.15 Likewise, there is some merit to similar culturalist claims within Turkey. But both fall into the same trap. Their worldview is of a civilisational black and white, with clear divisions and borders. In short, they both violate cultural pluralism.

The problem of discordant understandings of Westernisation, both within Turkey and between the Kemalist elites and the West, is reflected in the different character of Turkey's relationship with the EU on the one hand and with the US on the other. In thinking about the future it is vital to keep the different character of these relationships distinct. The passion of Turkey's Kemalist elites to legitimise their Westernising project has led to a general embracing of all available linkages to the West. But the Kemalist project's narrow and old-fashioned understanding of Westernisation - particularly the strength of its statist, nationalist and authoritarian elements, and the weakness of its commitment to democracy and pluralism - makes some relationships easier, others more difficult to sustain. Turkey's social and political differences from the West do not stand in the way of its memberships in NATO, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). These memberships in part reflect the successes of the Kemalist project, though they also reflect the exigencies of the West's strategic needs during the Cold War. In particular, domestic differences matter little in primarily military relationships, which explains why Turkey's relationship with the US is much less troubled than its relationship with the EU. While Turkey's relationship with the US is largely strategic, with the EC/EU it additionally incorporates the embracing of a Westernising identity project - to become a European state - where domestic differences matter. In pursuit of this goal, Turkey has both imposed a rather harsh version of Westernisation on its own people, and sought memberships in European bodies. It has gained not only its various agreements with the EU, but also membership of the Council of Europe and, since 1992, associate membership of the Western European Union (WEU), upgraded in 1995 to include voting rights. But going much further than this runs into the barriers of what might be called `identity politics' or 'societal security'.16 The contradiction is clear. Further integration between Turkey and the EU threatens the social and political self-identification of each to an unsustainable degree. Domestic differences that are acceptable

in more general strategic and economic relations, become unacceptable when the project is a quite deep integration of economy, law and politics such as that being undertaken by the members of the EU.

The end of the Cold War exposed differences between the EU and the US concerning relations with Turkey. During the Cold War, the strategic partnership overshadowed most other considerations. Since 1990, the deep problems thrown up by Turkey's aspiration to membership have moved to the forefront of the EU's concerns, whereas the US still retains a primarily strategic view of Turkey as a useful regional partner.17 Strong US support for Turkish acceptance into the EU creates tensions within NATO. This US position reflects the inertia of Cold War thinking in Washington, insensitivity to the real problems that Turkey and the EU pose for each other, and a lack of imagination for rethinking the question of EU membership specifically (and EU-Turkey relations more generally) in the light of post-Cold War realities.

The old game is now over. The EU has effectively withdrawn the promise of full membership for the foreseeable future, while within Turkey the Kemalist vision is increasingly challenged by Islamist elites who reject the Westernising project, not least because it denies them the construction of their own identity. The future, by contrast, seems to provide Turkey with a wider range of opportunities. With the independence of former Soviet republics in Central Asia, many Turks saw a new role and a new identity for their country, both within the Turkic and Islamic worlds.18 Moves towards democratisation in the second half of the 1980s provided domestic political space for alternatives to the Kemalist vision, resulting in a differentiation of the party system and culminating in the coming to power of the Islamic-based Refah (Welfare) Party in 1996.19 Although pressured out of government in 1997 by the military, and subsequently banned by the Constitutional Court, Refah had set up the most efficient structure of any political party in Turkey, and re-emerged after its banning as the Fazilet (Virtue) Party.20

Much of the outcry about Islamisation is overstated. Where Refah was in government at a local level, it often proved to be more effective than most of its predecessors. The reactions of the old political establishment to these successes - for example, the banning of Istanbul's Mayor Recep Tayip Erdogan from politics for quoting a popular, albeit blood-filled national poem - in some ways seem to be more fundamentalist than the Refah politicians themselves. This is not to praise the latter, but merely to argue that the reactions in Turkey, the US and the EU are based on the old concept of Westernisation.

The construction of a new relationship requires a new vision that takes into account:

the realities of identity politics in both Turkey and the EU, and the constraints and opportunities that these pose for how they relate to each other;

the distinction between Turkey's relationship with the EU and with the wider West, plus a reconsideration of what 'the West' means for each side;

the many common interests shared by Turkey and the EU;

the long-term differences that are likely to set them apart.

Joint Interests

Joint interests start with strategic geography. Turkey sits at the edge of three more-or-less distinct regions of conflict - the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus - and has a role in two more that are at a slight geographical remove from it - west Central Europe, and the Commonwealth of

Independent States (CIS) region. From a systemic perspective, it plays the role of an insulator, a peripheral actor in all of the security regions surrounding it, but not centrally involved in any. This should not be read as Turkey being unimportant to its neighbours; its main function, in practice, is to separate other regional security dynamics from each other.21 This insulating position is unusually complicated. The danger for Turkey is that it will become party to conflicts on more than one front. Given the complexity of its security environment, Turkey needs to cultivate stability on as many fronts as possible if it is to avoid living in a zone of permanent conflict. Whether this can be achieved by bringing Turkey squarely into the EU seems doubtful. It is more likely that such a situation would lead to a direct entanglement of the EU in the security dynamics of the Middle East and the CIS. Meanwhile, Turkey's security links to the Western powers via its NATO membership should be sufficient to meet its own security concerns.

The strategic interests shared by Turkey and the EU should be obvious. For the EU, Turkey can provide security insulation from the Middle East, and a partner in stabilising the Balkans. For Turkey, the EU can provide a stable and supportive relationship, a partner in containing conflict in the Balkans generally, and the Greek-Turkish conflict in particular. Although Greece is itself part of the Union and has influence over the EU's foreign policy, it also seems likely that EU membership contributes to some restraint on the part of Athens. Should things turn bad in the CIS region, some aspects of the Turkish/ EU mutual interest against Soviet/Russian problems, defined during the Cold War partnership, might also revive. Both sides should want to prevent the growth of any linkage between the security dynamics of the Middle East and those of the Balkans.

Unfortunately, this assessment does not seem to be shared by all of the governments concerned. Turkey's emergent 'alliance' with Israel, and the possibility of a Greece-Syria counter-axis, is particularly worrying in this regard.22 The EU has no interest in becoming more involved in these conflicts than it already is by way of Greece. Turkey's assertive behaviour towards Syria and Italy in late 1998 is a warning of just how badly things could go wrong if no new foundations are laid for EU-Turkey relations. Although not indicated by some of its behaviour, Turkey's interest in regional stability is strong. Its leaders can have no rational interest in finding themselves at the centre of a whole series of regional conflicts that they do not have the power either to control or contain. And there has been a more positive side to Turkey's behaviour: for example its role, culminating in 1992, in creating the Black Sea Economic Cooperation project (BSEC) as a bridge between East and West;23 and its policy towards the Turkish-speaking newly independent states.24 The vision of an intense system of cooperation between Turkic states on the basis of a common language and cultural heritage may not have lived up to early expectations. But it still has the potential to help in constructing a positive identity for Turkey in the international system, and it may also help the new Turkic states to find their feet in the turbulent regional politics of Central Asia. In non-military security relations like these, there is undoubtedly considerable scope for Turkey to play some kind of bridging role between the EU and countries further afield. There must also be a role for Turkey in the Balkans, where it shares the EU's interest in stabilisation. Turkey's re-engagement there started in the 1980s with the problem of the Bulgarian assimilation campaign against Turks, and followed through with its engagement in the sustained crisis resulting from the break-up of Yugoslavia. As a rule, Turkey's Middle Eastern engagements create more ties with the US than with Europe, whereas its Balkans and Black Sea engagements create more ties with the EU than with the US.

Because of the primarily strategic nature of the ties between them, the US and Turkey have far fewer identity questions to complicate their relationship although ties to the US do support the Westernisers within Turkey. For the US, Turkey is a useful strategic partner in the Middle East and the CIS region. Washington welcomes Turkey's growing links with Israel, another close US ally; the three countries

have staged joint military training exercises. The US does not have strong interests in the Balkans and is loath to be involved there. For Turkey, the US is a supplier of arms (not always reliable), and a link to the West which is independent of Turkey's links with the EU. The danger is that the US will exploit Turkey's services, as in the 1991 Gulf War and its aftermath, without paying much in return for the considerable costs incurred.

Enduring Differences

There are likely to be several durable points of difference between Turkey and the EU, and these need to be taken into account if a new relationship is to be built. The first is the EU's general enlargement dilemma, discussed at further length below. The second problem is Greek-Turkish hostility, and the division of Cyprus. The decision of the Cypriot government in 1997 to station Russian S-300 missiles on the island was no help in this respect. Although Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides gave in to Greek pressure at the beginning of January 1999, agreeing to station the missiles on Crete instead of Cyprus, this solution will not ease the worries of Turkish military strategists. There is also strong resistance even within the Cypriot government to withdrawing from the deal, with Defence Minister Ioannis Omirou and Education Minister Likourghos Kappas resigning in protest. The EU decision to open formal membership negotiations with Cyprus is no less problematic. Hope for a change of actors' behaviour in light of the postulated economic benefits of membership is mistaken. It is not economic, but societal security that is at issue for those on the island, and political and military security for Greece and Turkey. A much more likely outcome is the importing of the conflict into the EU, with considerable destabilising effects on its internal politics and institutions, and a deteriorating relationship with Turkey.25The EU thus needs to find a way to neutralise the ability of Athens to hold the overall enlargement process hostage to Cyprus' candidacy. One option would be to follow the French line and argue for stricter political preconditions for membership, as has been done vis-a-vis Latvia and Estonia with respect to the treatment of the Russian minority. Simultaneously, the other EU members will have to make it clear to Greece that alienating them and future member states cannot be in Greece's long-term interest, because such a development would reduce and not enhance its influence on future policy decisions.26 Finally, a more flexible approach to membership might also be helpful in the Cyprus case, not least because it can hardly be expected that Turkey will accept full EU membership of Cyprus as a whole, while Turkey itself must remain outside.

Third is the whole problem of 'Europeanness' for both the EU and Turkey. What is involved here is more than just the name and the commitment in the EC's founding treaty to 'an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe'. Article O of the Maastricht Treaty specifies that it is 'European' states that may become members of the Union. To state this requirement implies a definition of who is European. If Turkey meets the criteria, then why not North Africa, Russia or Central Asia? Morocco's 1986 application was turned down unambiguously because it was considered to be a non-European state.27 With Turkey, things are more complicated because its claim of belonging to Europe cannot so easily be dismissed due to history, geographical position, prior international agreements and the way these are conceptualised in the public debate. Article O's criterion of 'Europeanness' means that the EU has to commit itself either to the construction of a hard border distinguishing 'us' from 'them', or to the construction of layered frontier zones in which the countries on its periphery are 'inside' for some purposes but not for others.28

For Turkey, the problem of Europeanness is what to do with the Turkic and Islamic underpinnings of the national culture. The Kemalist project of Europeanisation is problematic, both because of its narrow definition of what it means to be 'European', and because many Turkish citizens are unwilling to see their own cultural heritage erased to the necessary degree. One way out of this dilemma is to promote

the model of Turkey - like Russia, Japan and Israel - as a 'Westernistic' state which can never be purely Western or European by definition.29 A Westernistic state aspires to synthesise its own culture with Western ideas about organising the political economy, as Japan has done with such conspicuous success. But it does not seek to replace its own culture with that of the West. Promoting a Westernistic rather than a purely Western aspiration should help to ameliorate the alienation of Turkey from the EU that the membership issue has caused. Such a concept is not alien to Turkey's historical relationship with the 'West'. For much of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman state elite attempted to both modernise and save what they could of the empire through a Europeanisation that integrated elements of European political culture into the old Ottoman framework.30

The fourth enduring problem between the EU and Turkey concerns human rights in particular, and bad government in general. The human-rights issue arises not only from Turkey's authoritarian political traditions, and the strong political role of the military, but also from the unresolved issue of Turkey's Kurdish minority, and the country's apparent inability, or unwillingness, to solve this question by democratic means. The Kurdish problem has been an open sore in Turkish politics since 1984 when the PKK instigated an ongoing insurrection. Human-rights issues, largely though not wholly connected to the suppression of the Kurds, led to the suspension of the Ankara Agreement between 1982 and 1988.31 Ankara's treatment of the Kurds blends into a wider problem of bad government in Turkey, and slow progress towards building a democratic political culture - which is not a central pillar of Kemalism. Neither the country's elites, with their generally corrupt, inefficient, personalised and ineffective system of political parties, nor the masses have moved far from the authoritarian traditions of the Ottoman Empire and its weak civil society. The government's influence on the security apparatus is very limited, and the military still functions as a quasi-autonomous entity.32 The 1998 military intervention against Refah shows the durability of this problem, reinforced by those - both inside and outside Turkey - who take the Westernisation claims at face value and, by hyping an Islamist 'threat', help to legitimise the military's action. The military's role in politics is an important part of what has disqualified Turkey from full membership of the EU. In its 'Agenda 2000', the European Commission noted critically that 'recent developments in the [Turkish] administration and education system, while intended to strengthen secularism, nonetheless underline the particular role of the military in Turkish society'.33

Although in principle a solvable problem, in practice it would require generations before Turkey's civic and political culture could take the same form as that found in the EU's core. Indeed, if Turkey takes an openly Westernistic path of development, it might well reach a style of civic and political modernisation that is significantly different from that developed in Europe, but which still adheres to basic rules of democracy and human rights. Being off the list of prospective entrants should take some of the heat out of EU-Turkish relations, but even as an associate member, Turkey can expect to receive continuous pressure from the EU about its domestic political life - and rightly so. The EU is, by its entire logic, 'post-Westphalian': that is, it represents a model of relations between states that goes significantly beyond the principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention established by the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia. Part of the price to be paid even for partial association with an international organisation such as the EU is tolerance of a high level of mutual interference in domestic affairs, aimed at harmonising a wide range of legal, moral and institutional practices.

The EU's post-Westphalian character underscores a fifth and final durable difference between Turkey and the EU. The EU project would be imperilled by taking modernising states such as Turkey into its postmodern collective.34 The EU as a security community - that is to say, as a group of states that neither expects, nor prepares for, the use of force in relations amongst themselves would be threatened by accepting as members states that are still ready to go to war with their neighbours, or which still

seek the status of independent regional powers. For such states, the predominant 'other' is their neighbour, which contrasts starkly with an EU political identity founded on collective fear of its members' own past.35 From this perspective, the EU made a serious mistake in admitting Greece in 1981. Like Turkey, Greece does not adequately fit with the attitudes of 'security community' that characterise the rest of the EU's membership. While NATO has managed to cope with having two hostile and potentially warring members within its ranks, it is far from clear that the more delicate structures of the EU could withstand this kind of tension.

In this context, further problems flow from Turkey's aspiration - revived after the Cold War - to once again play the role of an independent middlesized power in its region. The long period of Turkey's relative detachment from the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia is over. Turkey has an ambitious 30-year, $150 billion plan to build up a substantial defence-industrial sector. Ankara wants greater military independence from unreliable Western suppliers, one reason for its growing relationship with Israel as an alternative source of military technology.36 In the years since its participation in the US-led coalition against Iraq, Turkey has embarked on an ever more complex set of relations in the Middle East. These include:

an emerging 'alliance' with Israel (and seemingly also with Jordan, in order to avoid too anti-Arab appearances);

the enduring hostility to Syria, whose support for the PKK inspired Turkey to threaten military action against it late 1998;

a somewhat milder rivalry with Iran, reflecting the traditional hostility between the Ottoman and Persian Empires;

the frequent interventions against the Kurds in Iraq, and the general entanglement that this creates with Syria and Iran because of the Kurdish populations in those countries;

tensions with Syria and Iraq over water supplies, arising from Turkey's dam-building projects on the upper reaches of the Euphrates river. To the extent that Turkey wishes to, or cannot avoid, playing an independent power role in the Middle East, it will further reduce the likelihood of gaining membership in the EU. Up to a point, there is no necessary contradiction between a more independent Turkish role in the Middle East, and continued close security links between the EU and Turkey. Turkey's links with the US will probably be even more tolerant of such a role. But the EU will want to keep Turkey as a security insulator between itself and the Middle East, and to resist at all costs Turkey's becoming a short-circuit between the security dynamics of the Middle East and those of the Balkans.

All these differences are sufficiently large and durable to make the 1997 Luxembourg decision seem correct - however ill-mannered and hurtful the circumstances of its delivery. But the decision leaves an urgent, unanswered question of how to acknowledge the differences, yet grasp the equally compelling argument and durable joint interests to carve out a more stable relationship that puts less stress on the domestic affairs of both parties.

Outlines of a New Direction

Turkey and the EU now badly need to develop some new and more realistic expectations about their future relationship. The EU needs an alternative to the stark choice between acceptance and rejection, and Turkey needs an alternative to feeling rejected. One key to achieving this goal is to abandon the

strict 'inside/outside' conception of the EU which has governed the old game. That conception has now openly failed as a basis for EU-Turkey relations.

Turkey's aspiration to full membership in the EU has given the latter considerable leverage over Turkey's domestic politics. This has been useful in pushing forward agendas of both democratisation and economic liberalisation in Turkey since the 1950s.37 The EU should not want to lose this role, and those in Turkey who support the liberal agenda should not want to lose it either, although both sides should be clearer about the differences in their political aims. Turkey thus needs to be sufficiently a part of Europe to sustain its economic, social and political development, though parts of this agenda can also be pursued through Turkey's wider linkages with the West. Given these links, and the forms of cooperation already in place between Turkey and the EU, it should not be assumed that Turkey will necessarily fall back on the schedule of further democratisation once full EU membership is no longer considered a first option. Turkey's embeddedness in the 'West' - including its human-rights commitments within the framework of the Council of Europe - is too strong simply to be discarded.

For the EU, the main goal should be to develop Turkey as a close associate, and perhaps as a model for the flexible relationships it needs to develop with a whole set of states in the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe. Different degrees and types of functional integration will apply to different states and regions, creating not a hard boundary between the EU and its neighbours, but a broad zone of association. This is often discussed under the name of 'concentric circles', but the emerging multifaceted regime of governance may well be messier than this metaphor implies. The development of such an alternative is imperative. The basic conflict between the EU's deepening and widening cannot be fudged or wished away: there are limits as to how many member states with very different histories can be included in a supranational union based on a single acquis communautaire.

The EU does not have, and should not aspire to, a single border. There will almost certainly be an EU core, all of whose members are 'inside' for all purposes. But there are already many states that are inside for some purposes and outside for others. The UK, for example is 'outside' in some important areas (monetary union, the Schengen Agreement reducing border controls) as are several others. In principle, and increasingly in practice, the EU seems likely to develop like many classical empires, fading away through a series of frontier zones whose attachment to the core decreased as one approached the outer edge of the imperial penumbra. In the case of the EU, the pattern of concentric circles is less about imperial control than about types and degrees of association. Turkey is well placed to be both the leading member of the outercircles group of associated states, and the model for how the EU relates to its penumbra. Turkey's position in this regard is strengthened by the quite numerous and solid ties that it already has with the wider West. Whatever its dissatisfactions over its exclusion from the EU core, Turkey can take considerable comfort from the fact that it has achieved a level of integration into European and Western institutions that is the envy of many comparable countries. And by not being fully inside the EU, Turkey leaves itself more room to take on its own leadership roles, and to style itself as an independent actor and a regional centre in its own right. It can then accentuate its role as a bridgebuilder between different cultures instead of placing itself squarely in one camp. At the same time, it would be able to preserve its insulating role in matters of military security.

Once the old inside/outside approach is discarded, the challenge becomes one of how to translate the new approach into concrete political institutions. This question should be considered in the light of the distinction between Turkey's relationships with the EU and with the wider West. As a Westernistic country, Turkey should be, and in many ways already is, tied into the whole of the Atlantic world and its key clubs - NATO, the OECD and the OSCE, all of which Turkey already belongs to. It is also a member of the Wassenaar Arrangement, successor to the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral

Export Controls (COCOM). In the case of NATO, Turkey has the distinction of being a full member, and not just an associate in the Partnership for Peace (PFP). Turkey is also a member of the Council of Europe, which while not an EU body nonetheless strengthens Turkey's claims for recognition as part of the European system of states, and is a major force for the guarantee of human rights. F. Stephen Larrabee has suggested, in addition, the setting-up of a US-EU-Turkey consultative forum.38 Given their common interests in the Balkans, the Middle East and the Black Sea area, and given also the advantage that Greece has in being inside the EU, this seems a good idea. Due to the likely persistence of Greek intransigence on relations with Turkey, some counterbalance is necessary.

Which position within an EU of concentric circles might Turkey take on? It already has associate membership in the EU, and a full customs union, both of which should be maintained. The central task, however, will be to place Turkey on the 'cognitive map' of the EU's decision-makers, where it has so far (and especially after the events of 1989-90) been ignored as a significant actor in its own right, and more or less been treated as an object on the fringes.39 This has reinforced Turkey's feeling of being left at the sidelines at best, or becoming Europe's self-defining 'other' at worst. A vital step would consist in creating fora in which Turkey and the EU could coordinate their policies without entangling each and every issue into the membership problematic. In fact, such fora do not have to be created out of the blue, but may be built upon current institutions, among them the Association Council of the Ankara Agreement, and the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee. In a similar way, the European Conference could be upgraded from a forum simply to discuss the adjustment of applicant states' political and economic systems to EU requirements, to a permanent conference including all 'concentric circle' states and dealing with matters in which EU decisions affect others beyond its full members. The Conference's presidency would then have to rotate between all its members, and not be reserved to the EU presidency.

The effects of such changes would be a continued participation of Turkey in EU decision-making processes, and in particular in its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) discussions, without having to become a full member. Such a configuration would leave Turkey's systemic position as insulator intact, and would leave it with enough space to develop a leading role in the regional security dynamics that surround it. It would also acknowledge and enhance Turkey's vital role in the EU's regional cooperations in the Black Sea and other areas, which occupy a central place in the EU's relations with its neighbours.40 Finally, such a set-up should be underpinned by Turkey's participation in the EU's cultural and educational exchange programmes, such as Socrates (the European Community action programme for cooperation in the field of education). This would strengthen mutual understandings, as well as the further development of a Westernistic culture within Turkey.

With respect to the perennial conflicts between Turkey and Greece, ideally the EU and the US would use their combined leverage to press the two states towards a general settlement of the Aegean and Cyprus disputes.41 In reality these problems are so intractable that making their resolution - as opposed to their containment - a condition for anything else would be unrealistic and counter-productive. Greek-Turkish differences run deep. The Turkish military seems quite unwilling to let go of its strategic hold on northern Cyprus, which is a keystone to its whole conception of Turkey's future regional role and security needs; Greece and the Cypriot government have also contributed their share of provocative actions. This means that Greece and Turkey are highly unlikely themselves to generate proposals to settle the disputes between them. In order for the US and/or the EU to generate such proposals, they would have to have a clear sense of their own policy objectives in the area. But neither does. US policy is made incoherent by the contradictory demands of supporting Israel and maintaining its influence over the supply of oil. The EU has so far failed even to develop the political machinery to mount a CFSP, but its particular problem in this case is that Greece is among its members, and thus able to prevent any

policy that would run counter to Greek interests. Since rectification of these faults is not in prospect, the EU and the US are not in a position to push forward a comprehensive settlement of the Greek-Turkish problem.

As far as the EU is concerned, it should recognise that it cannot approach the conflict as if it were an outside player. However, even greater EU attention to the problem, and a more critical EU attitude towards Greece, will not resolve the conflict quickly. Probably the best that the US and the EU can do at this point is to continue to restrain the two sides from sliding into war, while helping to keep communication alive - an aim against which the opening of membership negotiations with Cyprus was counter-productive, or at least not helpful.

While the EU has much to do in order to reconstruct its relationship with Turkey, Turkey also has some difficult tasks to confront. Perhaps the hardest but also the most necessary - is to recognise the realities of its historical legacy, and accept a Westernistic rather than a Western self-definition. Doing so would allow Turkey to cultivate its similarities and its differences with Europe. It would free Turkey from the necessity to legitimate its own development by strictly European standards of civilisation, and offer an alternative to the destructive option of being either wholly in or wholly out of the EU. The legacies of history and geography mean that Turkey has a complicated hand to play. Its relationships with the US and the EU are potential trump cards.

The 1997 Luxembourg decision might go down in history not as a landmark of diplomatic rudeness, but as a turning point from which a more sustainable, and more mutually fruitful relationship began to develop. But this happier scenario will require significant changes of attitude on both sides. Some of these changes have already started to appear, such as Turkey's reorientation towards its northern and eastern neighbours and a more open debate about redefining the Kemalist six pillars, and many of them can be based on a set of heritages from the past, such as the modernisation strategies of the late Ottoman Empire. One should also remember that Turkey in the 1970s, when its relations with the US reached a low point, did draw a distinction between constructing itself as a European state and being part of European (or, in that case, North Atlantic) organisations.42 The idea that one may define oneself as 'European' without necessarily belonging to all European institutions as a full member was not alien to Turkish politicians, at least in that period. Foreign policy has not been as much debated within Turkey since the 1970s as it is today, with a recognised need for a coherent vision for the future.43 At the same time, the debate within the EU seems to have shifted towards a wider acceptance of flexible integration patterns.44

A failure to pursue more radical changes of attitude means that future relations will have as their foundation only the bitterness of Turkey's rejection, and the confusion and evasion of current EU policy. In such a poisoned environment, much will be lost that might have been gained by the sensible pursuit of mutual interests with respect for enduring differences.

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